Office of Campus Planning

On-Call Architects
for Interior Space Renovations & Programming

RFP Questions & Answers

June 27, 2025

Questions submitted to MIT about the On-Call Architects RFP dated June 6, 2025 are listed below, along with MIT's responses. Note that the original wording of some questions has been adjusted for clarity and similar questions have been consolidated.

Eligibility

Is lab experience as a specialty a requirement for consideration of this RFP?

No, firms need not have lab experience to apply. Firms may apply to be considered for up to four of the five expertise categories described in the RFP. Firms need only have experience in the expertise categories for which they would like to be considered.

If our firm does not carry the required amount of insurance for Commercial General Liability (per claim and aggregate), Automobile, and Professional Liability (if control budget is over $100M) is it acceptable to note this in the proposal, or will this make us ineligible for selection?

Firms that do not carry the specified coverage amounts are still eligible for selection. However, firms must clearly note any coverage gaps within Section J of their proposals.

Exhibit B, Article 2 identifies the insurance requirements for Professional Liability (E+O) coverage. Page 2, Paragraph 2 of the RFP notes that "Construction costs... typically ranges from $200,000-$2 million, occasionally approaching $7 million." For insurance coverage, please confirm if bidders will be required to meet the insurance requirements for control budgets < $2 million or control budgets from $2 million to $100 million as listed in Exhibit B, Article 2.

Insurance requirements are ultimately project specific. Selected firms that do not carry sufficient coverage for higher budget projects may not be considered for them.

Nature of projects

Page 3 of the RFP clearly states that "MIT cannot guarantee any set volume of projects." Is there a limit to the number of projects or total value of work that can be completed by any firm selected for the program over the duration of the contract?

There is no limit to the number of projects or total value of work that can be completed by a single firm. As projects emerge, MIT seeks to optimize fit between the project at hand and the selected On-Call firms. MIT cannot fully predict the type or number of projects of this scale that will emerge over the life of the contact.

Could you provide further clarification around the role of "design leader"? Would firms selected for this category be paired with other firms from the other categories or would they be expected to work on more complex projects?

Firms selected as design leaders will work as the sole architectural firm on assigned projects. They will bring deep, demonstrated experience in renovation projects of the scale described in the RFP *and* be able to cite recent, peer-reviewed work that has earned recognition and/or awards from the architectural community for design excellence. Successful firms will bring notable creativity and expertise in design problem-solving for renovation projects of multiple scales.

Does the renovation of classrooms include teaching/instructional laboratories?

Firms selected as lab renovation specialists will be asked to assist with renovation of teaching/instructional labs and/or research labs. Firms selected as interior renovation specialists may be asked to assist with renovation of traditional classrooms, active learning classrooms, lecture halls, and other non-lab teaching environments.

Can you provide clarification on leased properties vs. owned properties?

Selected firms will provide renovation and programming services for MIT departments in both leased spaces and MIT-owned spaces.

Does MIT have a preferred project collaboration tool?

MIT uses a range of project collaboration tools, including e-Builder, Zoom, Dropbox, and Sharepoint.

Are there any IT, AV, and/or security systems' standards? Or will this be furnished upon award? Does MIT have any mechanical and electrical specifications (i.e., lighting) that are to be adopted?

As noted in the RFP, selected firms will be expected to adhere to the latest version of MIT's Design Standards. Additional project-specific requirements will be provided to the selected firm during start-up of that assignment.

Does MIT have any architectural finishes and approved color palettes?

MIT has architectural finishes and approved color palettes for select spaces only. Selected firms will develop project-specific material palettes and specifications in conjunction with or for approval by the MIT Interiors team.

Are there any existing workplace strategy standards?

MIT seeks opportunities to use its spaces as efficiently as possible, and to provide spaces that best meet the needs of the departments, labs, centers, and MIT affiliates who use them. While there are no official workplace strategy standards at MIT, departments have approached the return to work since the early 2020s in different ways that are appropriate for each group's way of work. MIT's policy on flexible work can be found [here](). Over time, MIT has begun adapting spaces to reflect the more hybrid nature of work. MIT seeks firms with expertise in creative, space-efficient, user group-specific strategies for supporting on-campus workplace needs.

Will there be regular communications for upcoming opportunities to allow for planning or will all projects follow the RFQ/RFP process (particularly if multiple AE consultants hold an MDA)?

MIT will reach out to a selected firm when an appropriate opportunity arises. Typically, MIT will provide the scope, schedule, benchmark, and project intensity. The selected firm will use this information to develop a proposal under the pre-priced service agreement. Firms may decline projects at any time without penalty. MIT may also choose to bid a project to multiple firms at any time.

What is the preferred method of furniture procurement? Are there preferred vendors for furniture, and if so, are they arranged by region? Is Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment experience a relevant criterion for this role?

The MIT Interiors team specifies and procures all furniture with MIT's preferred furniture dealers. Selected firms may develop high level furniture concepts and will work with the MIT Interiors team to develop a cohesive design. Fixtures and equipment are the responsibility of the selected firm with guidance and approval by the MIT Interiors team.

Will the architect be required to hold contracts for the various consultants, or will each be contracted directly with MIT?

The architect will be expected to hold contracts for the various design consultants unless otherwise determined by the MIT Project Manager.

Will design-build methods be utilized for any of these projects?

MIT does not utilize design-build methods for project delivery under this contract.

Can MIT define the difference between a renovation project and a full building renewal project?

MIT seeks firms with successful experience renovating select spaces or floors within occupied buildings for budgets consistent with what is described in the RFP. Full building renewal projects are beyond the scope of this RFP.

Will other Interior Space Renovation project types that fall outside of the categories provided be awarded through on-call contracts or separately?

Most space renovation projects conducted by MIT's Department of Facilities fall within the categories described in this RFP. Should a unique project emerge that falls below MIT's capital project threshold, MIT may seek to meet that need using the list of selected On-Call Architects.

Can MIT clarify what qualifies as a "historically significant" building or space within the scope of this on-call service? Are these buildings formally listed (e.g., on the National Register), or internally designated by MIT? Does MIT expect strict preservation/restoration in historic spaces, or is adaptive reuse/modern intervention encouraged within a historic context? How will MIT evaluate preservation qualifications within the on-call selection process? Should we include preservation consultants as part of our proposed team?

No MIT buildings are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, MIT maintains a historic structures inventory identifying campus buildings of high, moderate, and low historic significance. MIT's expectations regarding strict preservation/restoration vs. adaptive reuse/modern intervention will vary based on the specific project and its context. For the historic preservation specialist category, MIT seeks firms that bring *internal* expertise in providing creative, context-sensitive preservation, restoration and/or thoughtful design interventions for renovations within historically significant buildings and spaces, at the scale described in Section 1 of the RFP.

In developing a shortlist of firms to be interviewed, MIT will rely heavily on Sections A, B, D, and E of the proposals to evaluate firms' qualifications for each expertise category.

Nature of projects — project management

Will the architect / design partner be involved with the budgeting process for each project, or will the budget be identified upfront and simply shared with the architect?

Project budgets will be determined by MIT and shared with the architect.

Please confirm if the MIT project manager or MIT's third-party project manager will submit permit packages for local jurisdiction review, or if A/E firms will need to identify allowances in the fee matrix (for a permit expeditor, for example)?

The A/E team will be responsible for providing a fully stamped permit set with associated affidavits. The General Contractor will submit the permit package for City of Cambridge review. The A/E team does not need to provide allowances for a permit expeditor.

How will decision-making and project approvals be coordinated? Will the MIT internal Project Manager have full authority for each project? Do you currently have master service agreements with any third-party project management groups?

The MIT internal Project Manager will be responsible for guiding the decision-making process and coordinating all internal MIT project approvals. At this time, MIT does not retain services from third-party project management groups.

How is MIT structured regarding project management? If external, is MIT hiring an external project manager for each location? If internal, will MIT's internal Project Managers oversee regional areas, or will they be designated on a project-by-project basis?

An MIT internal Project Manager will be assigned to each project on a case-by-case basis.

What is the preferred method of hiring GCs? Open-bid or negotiated?

The MIT Project Manager will determine the method of hiring a GC or CM on a project-by-project basis with input from the project stakeholders and A/E team. All projects are bid (either lump sum, or GCs and fee with a negotiated GMP).

Nature of projects — sustainability

Besides LEED, are there other rating systems that MIT would be interested in pursuing to measure sustainability goals (e.g., Living Building Challenge, WELL, Passive House, etc)? Are any LEED and/or WELL certifications expected? Should we provide additional fees for these services?

While MIT expects a sustainable design approach as a foundation for every project, most space renovation projects that fall under this program will not pursue rating systems to measure sustainability goals. If it is determined by MIT that a project will pursue a certification, an Add Service will be negotiated at that time based on the specific scope of work. MIT expects all selected architects to complete the Healthy Materials Tracker at each project phase as outlined in the RFP.

Are there sustainability objectives associated with any of the potential projects that could require additional specialty consultants?

Most space renovation projects that fall under this program will not pursue sustainability objectives that would require a specialty consultant. If a need arises, MIT will either contract directly with the required specialty consultant or negotiate an Add Service with the architect based on the specific scope of work. MIT expects all selected architects to complete the Healthy Materials Tracker at each project phase as outlined in the RFP.

Can you share a sample of the output of MIT's EEIC metrics?

MIT will provide this information to selected firms.

Submittal requirements and technical questions

Can you share the Owner/Architect Agreement with proposers for further understanding of the scope and obligations? The RFP references Exhibits A and B (Master Design Agreement and MDA Release), but we don't see these exhibits included anywhere. Can you provide instructions on where to access them?

Yes, a sample contract (the MDA) and the MDA Release are provided as Exhibits A & B. Both documents can be found under the *Bid Documents* tab in the e-Builder portal.

For firms with multiple offices, we assume the Statement of Interest should include how long the office staffing the projects has been in business to describe # of years, and not necessarily the year the parent company has been established. Please confirm intent.
Correct.

Are alumni considered "member of the MIT community" for Section I?
While alumni status is not regarded as a conflict of interest, it should be noted in your firm's response to Section I.

Is there a conflict-of-interest disclosure form or a general information form for legal confirmations that MIT would prefer respondents use?
No, MIT requires no specific form for firms' responses to Section I.

Under Section E Project Experience, it asks us to demonstrate recent successful experience (within past 5 years); is there any flexibility on this if some of our most recent, relevant experience falls just outside of the 5-year timeframe?
MIT will extend the eligible timeframe for recent project experience to 6 years.

Can any of the projects included in the response be projects at MIT?
Yes. But since MIT is already aware of Institute projects, we encourage you to cite experience with other clients as well.

Regarding experience, can we possibly include projects that are currently in design development?
Completed projects are preferred.

On page 7 of the RFP, for section D responses, is the page limit 1-2 pages for each ranked category or up to 4 ranked categories on 1-2 pages?
The latter; firms have up to 2 pages total to describe their qualifications for all categories they wish to be considered for.

If ranking multiple categories for consideration, should the team provide separate references for each category? Does the reference to projects at multiple scales (in the Design Leader category) apply to the $200k - $2m range previously mentioned?
The two references provided should, collectively, address the firm's skill and experience across all expertise categories for which the firm would like to be considered. Ideally, references should be able to speak to firms' experience with projects at the $200k to $2 million range referenced within the RFP.

For firms entering multiple categories, do you want to see resumes organized per ranked category?
Yes, thank you.

For Project Experience - some Project Team members, while newer to the firm, have valuable prior experience on projects that align with the needs of the RFP (such as working with Principal Investigators/Researchers, prior experience with MIT, etc.). Is it possible to include projects and client references for projects in which that person played a significant/leadership role? How should this prior experience be included/designated?

Yes, projects and references associated with a key team member's work at a prior firm may be included. However, in both cases, the team member, their project role, and the firm under which the work was executed must be clearly noted.

Would "point of entry for emerging firms" also apply to firms growing/repositioning, or wishing to expand into new market sectors?

No. However, MIT seeks a mix of emerging and long-established firms.

Can you please provide copy of MIT's Travel Policy?

Travel and reimbursement policies are outlined within the MDA (Exhibit A). Please note that, while there are no restrictions related to the location of proposing firms, firms located outside of the region must demonstrate their ability to be on site regularly – including for weekly project meetings – without burdening projects with travel costs.

Can the experiences from space programming and design strategy projects be linked to larger initiatives, even if these are not necessarily reflected in the construction costs described in the Request for Proposals?

Yes.

Can we include the references directly on the project cards under the "Project Experience" section?

Yes, if you'd like, but reference info must also be provided in Section F.

Can we list an MIT employee as a reference?

No, unless the MIT employee oversaw the project in a prior role, before coming to MIT.

Can we use the same project for multiple categories?

Yes.

On Page 9 of the RFP, Item J does not list a quantity of pages permitted for this item.

Section J must be 1-2 pages in length.

On Page 10 of the RFP, Item K does not list a quantity of pages permitted for this item.

The length of Section K is determined by the length of the contract documents.

Is it possible to remove the specification of font size 11?

No, typeface may not be smaller than 11 points.

Submittal requirements — Section G: Engineering Firms

Could you please clarify whether "Section G: Sub-Consultants" is intended to identify firms we would propose as part of our team for this specific pursuit, or if MIT is looking to build a broader roster of recommended sub-consultants for future consideration?

"Section G: Sub-Consultants" is intended to identify firms you would propose as part of your team for work with MIT under this contract.

Section G requests a list of MEP/FP/FA and structural consultants. Are there any other specialty consultants that should be considered as part of the team (e.g., sustainability/energy, low voltage, etc.)?

Please also identify proposed code consultants and acoustic consultants.

The RFP states that the team should recommend MEP/FP and Structural Engineers to serve as subconsultants. Is there a specific number of these firms that you would like us to identify? Should they be organized by category if the firm is applying for multiple expertise categories?

There are no requirements for the number of proposed subconsultant firms. List only those subconsultants you would propose on projects under this contract. Subconsultants specializing in a particular category should be noted as such.

Is the intention for the subconsultant lists to "right size" the consultant team to the project? Is it possible that MIT would request that the prime hire a subconsultant that was not included on the list provided in the submission?

Yes, MIT reserves the right to select the subconsultants on a project-by-project basis.

Will the recommended subconsultants influence the architecture firm's evaluation/ranking?

No.

Interviews

If short-listed for multiple categories, would separate interviews be conducted for each considered category? Or would they be combined into a single interview?

We expect that firms shortlisted for interviews will be interviewed only once, and that, within that interview, firms will be asked to cover each area of expertise for which they have been shortlisted.

If selected for the interview phase, what does the interview process involve? Is it an in-person meeting to meet the team and discuss qualifications package or are teams encouraged to prepare a visual presentation/PowerPoint?

Firms shortlisted for interviews will be asked to deliver a brief visual presentation of relevant experience.